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I.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SIR HUMPHRY DAVY.

SIR HUMPHRY DAVY was born at Penzance, in Cornwall, on the 17th of December, 1778. Having received the rudiments of a classical education under Dr. Cardew, of Truro, he was placed with a respectable professional gentleman of the name of Tonkin, at Penzance, in order that he might acquire a knowledge of the profession of a surgeon and apothecary. His master, however, soon became dissatisfied with his new pupil: instead of attending to the duties of surgery, Humphry was wandering along the sea-shore, and often, like Demosthenes, declaiming against the wind and waves, in order to overcome a defect in his voice, which, although only slightly perceptible in his maturer age, was, when a boy, extremely discordant; instead of preparing medicines for the doctor's patients, he was experimenting in the garret, and, upon one occasion, he produced an explosion that put the doctor and all his phials in jeopardy. At length a negociation between the parents and the master commenced, with a view of releasing the parties from their engagement; and we believe that Humphry returned home. It is, however, but fair to state, that he always entertained the highest respect for Mr. Tonkin, and never spoke of him but in terms of affectionate regard.

We shall here pause in our narrative, for the purpose of introducing a few anecdotes, which will serve not only to illustrate the early character of Davy, but to exhibit, in their origin and growth, several of those prominent peculiarities which distinguished him in after-life. That he was a boy of decision and courage, may be inferred from the fact of his having, upon receiving a bite from a dog, taken his pocket-knife, and, without the least hesitation, cut out the part on the spot. The gentleman who related this anecdote observed, that he had frequently heard him declare his disbelief in the existence of pain, if the energies of the mind were directed to counteract it; but he added that he very shortly afterwards had an opportunity of witnessing a practical refutation of this doctrine, for, upon being bitten by a fish, Sir Humphry roared out most lustily! . . . .

A French vessel having been wrecked near the Land's End, the surgeon became acquainted with young Davy, and, in return for some kind offices, presented him with his case of surgical instruments. The contents were eagerly turned out and examined; not, however, with any professional view of their utility, but in order to ascertain how far they might be

convertible to philosophical purposes. The old-fashioned and clumsy clyster apparatus was viewed with exultation, and seized with avidity. What violent changes, what reverses, may not be suddenly effected by a simple accident! so says the moralist,—behold an illustration: in the brief space of an hour did this long-neglected and unobtrusive machine, emerging from its obscurity and insignificance, figure away in all the pomp and glory of a complicated piece of pneumatic apparatus. The most humble means may, undoubtedly, accomplish the highest objects,—the filament of a spider's web has been used to measure the motions of the stars; but that a worn-out clyster-pipe should have thus furnished the first philosopher of the age with the only means of inquiry within his reach, certainly affords a whimsical illustration of the maxim. Nor can we pass over these circumstances without observing how materially they must have influenced the subsequent success of Davy as an experimentalist. . . .

The next prominent occurrence in Davy's life, was his introduction to Mr. Davies Giddy, now Mr. Gilbert, the present distinguished and popular President of the Royal Society. The manner in which this happened furnishes an additional instance of the power of mere accident in altering our destinies. Mr. Gilbert's attention was, from some trivial cause, attracted to the young chemist, as he was carelessly lounging over the gate of his father's house. A person in the company of Mr. Gilbert observed, that the boy in question was young Davy, who was much attached to chemistry. "To chemistry?" said Mr. Gilbert; "if that be the case, I must have some conversation with him." Mr. Gilbert, who, as is well known, possesses a strong perception of character, soon discovered ample proofs of genius in the youth; and liberally offered him the use of his library, or any other assistance that he might require, for the pursuit of his studies.

Davy, at the age of nineteen, was engaged by Dr. Beddoes to superintend his Pneumatic Institution, at Bristol, and, two years after, was appointed lecturer on chemistry at the Royal Institution, on the recommendation of Count Rumford.

It would not be difficult to cite some personal anecdotes, in order to show what an alteration was suddenly effected in the habits and manners of Davy by his elevation. But where is the man of twenty-two years of age to be found, unless the temperature of his blood be below zero, who could remain uninfluenced at such a change? Look at Davy in the laboratory at Bristol, pursuing with eager industry various abstract points of research; mixing only with a few philosophers, sanguine like himself in the investigation of chemical phenomena, but whose worldly knowledge was bounded by the walls of the institution in which they were engaged. Shift the scene;—could the spells of an enchanter effect a more magical transformation? Behold him in the theatre of the Royal Institution! surrounded by an aristocracy of intellect, as well as of rank, by the flowers of genius, the *élite* of fashion, and the beauty of England,—whose very respirations were suspended in their eagerness to catch his novel and satisfactory elucidations of the mysteries of nature! We admit

that his vanity was excited by such extraordinary demonstrations of devotion; that he lost that simplicity which constituted the charm of his character, and assumed the garb and airs of a man of fashion; —is it wonderful if, under such circumstances, the robe should not always have fallen in graceful draperies? But the charms of the ball-room did not allure him from the pursuits of the laboratory. He had a capacity for both, and his devotions to Terpsichore did not interfere with the rites of Minerva. So popular did he become, under the auspices of the Duchess of Gordon, and other leaders of fashion, that their *soirées* were considered incomplete without his presence; and yet the crowds that repaired to the Institution in the morning were, day after day, gratified by newly-devised and instructive experiments, performed with the utmost address, and explained in language at once the most intelligible and most eloquent.

It is not our intention to give even a sketch of Davy's discoveries; they are too well known to require it, nor would our limits admit of more than a mere catalogue; suffice it to say, that from this time he became acknowledged as the first chemist of the age, and published a succession of most valuable papers, as well as several extended works.

Sir Humphry Davy was in every respect an accomplished scholar, and was well acquainted with foreign languages. He always retained a strong taste for literary pleasures; and his philosophical works are written in a perspicuous and popular style, by which means he has contributed more to the diffusion of scientific knowledge than any other writer of his time. His three principal works are, "Chemical and Philosophical Researches," "Elements of Chemical Philosophy," and "Elements of Agricultural Chemistry;" and the two last are excellently adapted for elementary study. His numerous pamphlets and contributions to the Transactions of the Royal Society, have the same rare merit of conveying experimental knowledge in the most attractive form, and thus reducing abstract theory to the practice and purposes of life and society. The result of his investigations and experiments was not, therefore, pent up in the laboratory or lecture-room where they were made, but, by this valuable mode of communication, they have realized, what ought to be the highest aim of science, the improvement of the condition and comforts of every class of his fellow-creatures. Thus, beautiful theories were illustrated by inventions of immediate utility, as in the *safety-lamp* for mitigating the dangers to which miners are exposed in their labors, and the application of a newly-discovered principle in preserving the life of the adventurous mariner. Yet, splendid as were Sir Humphry's talents, and important as have been their application, he received the honors and homage of the scientific world with that becoming modesty which universally characterizes great genius.

Apart from the scientific value of Sir Humphry's labors and researches, they are pervaded by a tone and temper, and an enthusiastic love of nature, which are as admirably expressed as their influence is excellent. We trace no mixture of science and scepticism, and in vain shall we look for the spawn of infidel doctrine. The

same excellent feeling breathes throughout "Salmonia, or Days of Fly-fishing," a volume published in 1828, and one of the most delightful labors of leisure ever seen. Not a few of the most beautiful phenomena of nature are here lucidly explained; yet the pages have none of the varnish of philosophical unbelief, or finite reasoning. The work is arranged in a series of conversations, and we are told, in the preface, that "these pages formed the occupation of the author during several months of severe and dangerous illness, when he was wholly incapable of attending to more useful studies, or of following more serious pursuits." . . . .

The great philosopher closed his mortal career at Geneva. He had arrived in that city only the day before, namely, the 29th of May, 1829, having performed his journey from Rome by easy stages, without feeling any particular inconvenience, and without any circumstances which denoted so near an approach to the payment of the last debt of nature. During the night, however, he was attacked with apoplexy; and he expired at three o'clock on the morning of the 30th.—Sir Humphry had been for some time a resident at Rome, where he had had a serious and alarming attack of a paralytic nature, but from which he was apparently, though slowly, recovering; although his most sanguine friends hardly ventured to hope that his valuable life would be much longer preserved.—*Lond. Med. Gaz.*

II.

NEW REMEDY FOR LEUCORRHŒA.

Mr. Jewel concludes his very interesting observations, made at a late meeting of the Westminster Medical Society, on the use of the *Nitrate of Silver* in uterine discharges, by a few practical remarks,—which, with the subsequent discussion, we give below.

I NOW come to the most important part of the treatment—the application of the nitrate of silver. After extensive trials and observation, I can say that its effects are as conspicuous in leucorrhœal complaints as in any of the various local diseases in which it has hitherto been employed. I would allude particularly to the different mucous tissues, such as those of the fauces and larynx. The mode I have adopted in its application, has been to conceal it in a silver tube, on the same principle as it is employed in cases of stricture in the male, except that the tube should be adapted to the size of the caustic. I have also frequently used it in the form of solution, as an injection, in the proportion at first of three grains to the ounce, gradually increasing its strength. There is another method of applying it: a bit of sponge neatly fastened on to a piece of whalebone, may be dipped in the solution, and introduced frequently into the vagina; but I consider the most efficient mode to be that of applying it through the speculum. This, however, can only be accomplished in the absence of tenderness and excoriations: indeed there are many females who will not submit to the introduction of the dilator or speculum. I have now employed this remedy in a great variety of cases, and in almost every instance with success. It is satisfactory to observe that its application in either form gives no more pain

than that commonly produced by the use of astringents. Whether the practice, which is a novel one in this country, may prove so successful in other hands as it has in mine, time and experience will determine. It must be admitted that, under ordinary circumstances, such cases sometimes prove exceedingly obstinate, too frequently leading to irreparable injury of the constitution, or to permanent and fatal organic changes.

Dr. Thomson having made a few remarks upon the location of the disease—

The Chairman called upon the author of the paper to describe any case in which he had employed the nitrate of silver with success.

Mr. Jewel then alluded to the case of a woman who had labored under excessive leucorrhœal discharge, with severe local pains, upwards of three years. She had been under the care of several practitioners, most of whom had pronounced the disease to be one of scirrhus. The nitrate of silver was applied eight different times to the cervix uteri, which, together with some other means usually adopted, completely cured the patient. A case of gonorrhœa in the female was also mentioned, in which an injection, in the proportion of three grains to the ounce of water, effectually cured the patient in three days.

Dr. Copland observed on the necessity of deciding on the pathology of leucorrhœa, as the use of astringent injections sometimes did considerable mischief, when the complaint arose from inflammation. He alluded also to ascarides as being occasionally an exciting cause of the disease. The best mode of getting rid of these he stated to be by an injection of assafœtida and camphor.

Dr. Granville being in the chair, thought if he gave his opinions they might be considered an intrusion; but he would offer a few remarks with the leave of the Society. He would go even farther than Cullen had done as to the seat of the disease, for he believed sometimes the discharge came from the lining of the Fallopian tubes. In post-mortem examinations he had removed flakes of the morbid secretion from the os uteri. The cervix was a very sensible part, and he thought that the practice adopted by Mr. Jewel would frequently be of service. He had applied leeches to the cervix uteri, through the speculum of Recamier; and although the operation was a tedious one to the practitioner, it gave great relief to the patient.

III.

SMALLPOX, VARIOLOID AND VACCINATION.

Dr. John Bell, in a very able and interesting dissertation on the value of vaccination as a preventive of smallpox, arrives at the following conclusions. Being the result of very extensive experience and much personal observation on the subject, they are the better entitled to our confidence.

1. Smallpox proves fatal to one in about five cases, when contracted naturally.

2. The eruptive diseases known under the names of sheeppox, swinepox, waterpox, windpox, hornpox, &c., are all varieties

of smallpox, produced by atmospheric influence, constitutional peculiarities, or some other unknown causes.

3. Varicella, or chickenpox, formerly regarded as a variety of smallpox, but since the year 1767 considered a distinct disease, must be again restored to its former situation, and classed with the varieties just mentioned.

4. Smallpox is modified in three several ways: 1st, by a previous occurrence of the same disease; 2d, by inoculation; and, 3d, by vaccination.

5. Though it is difficult to form even a tolerably accurate estimate of the degree of protection which the first of these cases offers, from the want of sufficiently extensive data, yet it is evident from those which we have, that though cases of this kind are more rare, they have proved more fatal than those succeeding inoculation.

6. Smallpox, communicated by inoculation under favorable circumstances and in a proper manner, does not prove fatal in more than one in three hundred cases, though its former mortality was much greater.

7. Inoculation should be discouraged in every manner possible, since its performance serves to keep up and diffuse the smallpox amongst those who, from ignorance or negligence, possess no protection against it.

8. Vaccination furnishes, in a great proportion of cases, a complete and perfect immunity against the attacks of smallpox.

9. It modifies the access of smallpox in a slight degree, usually rendering the febrile stage somewhat milder, although the stomach and respiratory organs are often more strongly affected than in its ordinary course.

10. It possesses a controlling power over the progress of inflammation in the eruption, shortens its course in the majority of cases, prevents its reaching the pustular stage, and, in almost every instance, obviates the occurrence of secondary fever.

11. The varioloid disease, or smallpox after vaccination, does not endanger life; there being no case on record in which it has proved fatal, after the system has been thoroughly subjected to the influence of the cowpox.

12. That reason and probability are highly in favor of the truth of Dr. Jenner's opinion, that the security which vaccination offers is in a direct proportion to the degree of perfection of the vaccine virus; and that in consequence, it is advisable to re-vaccinate as long as any effect is produced.

13. The vaccine virus, which has now been employed upwards of twenty years, in every civilized part of the globe, has suffered no deterioration; and it now confers all the security against the smallpox which it ever has done.

14. There are no grounds for believing that time weakens, in any degree, the protection which an individual receives from having been once properly vaccinated.

15. It cannot be considered otherwise than the duty, not only of all medical men, but of the public authorities and all interested in the public health, to encourage, as far as is practicable, the practice of vaccination.

IV.

MEANS OF RESISTING FIRE.

THE evening assemblies for the season began last week with Mr.

Faraday's account of Chevalier Aldini's apparatus for the protection of firemen and others who are exposed to flame. Previous to his entering upon the subject, Mr. Faraday briefly recalled the attention of the members to the past season, and claimed their assistance for the present. It gives us pleasure to mention, that on this, the opening night, we saw no appearance of any want of zeal in the cause : several noblemen and distinguished gentlemen were present.

After stating generally that Chevalier Aldini had for a long time been engaged in contriving and perfecting such defensive clothing for firemen and others as should enable them to penetrate and pass through flame, Mr. Faraday pointed to a few of these suits, composed of asbestos and wire gauze, which lay on the table. He then, as briefly as possible, touched upon the nature of flame, and the effect of wire gauze ; explaining the principles concerned, in so far as they bore on the present application. Wire gauze, it was observed, quenches flame, by abstracting heat, itself acquiring a high temperature. Pointing out this circumstance by experiment, he referred to the second part of the Chevalier's clothing, which consists of asbestos, and prevents the heat passing to the body. Two magnificent specimens of asbestos cloth, many feet square, were before the meeting. The difficulty with which this substance conducts heat was very clearly explained by the lecturer, and contrasted experimentally with the good conducting powers of metal and wire gauze. Further proof was then given by Mr. Faraday, who, having put on an asbestos glove, grasped an ignited and glowing bar of iron : he also carried on the palm of his hand a thick mass of the same metal, at a bright red heat, from one side of the room to the other, as if it were in its usual and harmless state.

After many further illustrations, the strongest proof to which Chevalier Aldini's system could be put in a room, was given in the following manner :—An Italian fireman, who is practised in the use of the apparatus, put on an asbestos cap-mask, in which were holes for the mouth and eyes guarded by wire gauze, a cuirass and casque of wire gauze, and, with a shield of the same material on his right arm, he faced a flame produced from oil gas, obtained by opening the orifice of a condensed oil-gas vessel, between two and three feet long: the flame was very bright and dense, and issued with terrific force from the vessel : in this posture he held his head and the upper part of his body, until the lecturer and the audience, becoming anxious for him, shut off the gas. Numerous considerations were then entered into respecting the intense heat of flame, the currents necessarily existing with it, the moral possibility of breathing the air from the middle of a clear, undulating flame of steam, &c., and an account of still stranger trials with the apparatus, which had been made in Geneva, Paris, Florence, and elsewhere, and which are to be given in London. The Chevalier Aldini was present ; he is the nephew of Galvani, very aged, but, stimulated by his desire to make known to the world what he thinks will be of great utility,

he has left his home to traverse Europe, and demonstrate the powers of his apparatus. The observations of Mr. Faraday were received with repeated marks of approbation; the feat performed by the Chevalier's attendant was in like manner loudly cheered.—*London Literary Gazette.*

V.

EXTIRPATION OF THE UTERUS PRACTISED A SECOND TIME, BY M. RECAMIER.

SINCE the first operation of extirpation of the uterus, performed by M. Recamier, it has been twice put in practice at La Charité, by M. Roux,—unfortunately both patients died. Nevertheless, Recamier, nothing daunted, has just performed this formidable operation a second time.

A lady, aged 35 or 36, was attended by M. Broussais for a chronic affection of the uterus, characterised by considerable swelling of the lips of the os tincæ. The posterior edge of this was already deeply ulcerated, and the mischief extending downwards towards the vagina, and upwards into the uterus. Under these circumstances, despairing of success by the ordinary means, M. Broussais called in M. Recamier, who gave it as his opinion, that extirpation was the only means left to be tried. Various consultations were held, at which MM. Marjolin and Desormeaux assisted, and these ended in a resolution to perform the operation, which was accordingly done by M. Recamier on the 13th of January, in the following manner:

The patient was placed upon an elevated bed, in the posture adopted in lithotomy, M. Lisfranc on one side, M. Sanson on the other; MM. Amussat and Broussais holding apart the lips of the vulva, while M. Recamier, stationed in front of the patient, introduced the index finger of the left hand into the vagina, as far as the neck of the uterus, and then taking one of the pincers, he placed it transversely on the anterior lip of the os uteri, and gave it to an assistant to hold, while he introduced another in a similar manner in the antero-posterior diameter of the same part. He then took both pincers himself, approximated them, and gently drew the neck of the uterus towards the external opening. At this moment one of the pincers slipped. It was reapplied higher up and more firmly than before. M. Recamier then gave both instruments to an assistant to hold, desiring him to keep them directed downwards, that they might not interfere with his manipulations. The next step consisted in pushing up the fundus of the bladder and corresponding part of the vagina, while with a small bistoury, having a convex blade, he gently divided the texture of the vagina at the bottom of the sinus formed by the union of this canal with the anterior lip of the os tincæ: he enlarged his incision laterally, to the extent of about an inch and a half. The operator now laid aside the cutting instrument, and with the nail and forefinger of the left hand, he separated the dense cellular tissue which unites the lower part of the bladder with the anterior part of the neck of the uterus, and in the same manner tore away the peritoneum, which forms the bottom of the *vesico-uterine* depres-

sion; the finger immediately passed into the peritoneal cavity, and was carried, first to the left of the uterus along the upper edge of the broad ligament, and then to the right, in the same manner. At these two times M. Recamier, by means of a bistoury (concave on the cutting edge, and guarded by a sheath), divided a small part of the upper border of each broad ligament, to the extent of about six lines. Then a needle, armed with a double-waxed thread, was successively carried up to the same ligaments, and passed through their bases from behind forwards; one of the ends of the thread was carried forwards, the needle being afterwards removed by a movement the reverse of that employed for its introduction.

In this way each broad ligament was included in the noose of the thread, except at the upper edge, which had been cut, that the peritoneum might not be pinched in the ligatures. A knot was run upon the thread, and firmly tied, so as to exert pressure on the uterine arteries, sufficient to interrupt the circulation through them. These precautions having been adopted, the uterus was instantly seized with the fingers at its base, and held from behind forwards, the broad ligaments cut within the ligatures, the uterus separated from the vagina and rectum, and the operation completed.

During the incision of the broad ligament on the right side, the cutting instrument was carried too close to the ligature, so as to divide it, and cause the knot to slip. M. Recamier immediately said that he would make pressure, which accordingly he did with success. In the former operation, the epiploon alone presented itself at the wound, but on the present occasion, in addition to this, several folds of the small intestine were seen. These were retained by M. Amussat, whilst the operation was being completed. The section of the broad ligament was made a little beyond the ovary and fallopian tube, so that these parts were removed with the uterus, a circumstance which did not occur in the former case.

The patient had hemorrhage in the course of the day, which was arrested by plugging; notwithstanding this, however, blood flowed from time to time till next day, when she died in consequence.

Nothing can be more injudicious than an ill-timed compliment. The narrator of this case, immediately after informing that the cutting instrument was carried too close to the ligature, so as to divide it, and that the patient bled to death in consequence, adds, "Il est superflu de mentionner la *sûreté*, l'addresse, et le rare merite, que M. Recamier deploya dans l'execution de cette operation." We are far from calling the surgical skill of M. Recamier in question, but a better opportunity might have been taken of dwelling upon it.—*Jour. Hebdomadaire.*

VI.

MALIGNANT PUERPERAL FEVER.

From Professor Hamilton's Outlines of Midwifery.

THIS disease, which has attracted much attention within these few years, commonly appears within from twenty-four hours to the third or fourth day after delivery, beginning with shivering,

sometimes preceded by vomiting of bilious matter, followed by more or less pain of the belly; uneasiness of the forehead over the eyebrows; frequency of pulse, and marked anxiety of countenance. Soon after these symptoms, the belly becomes swelled, and intolerant of pressure, and is accompanied with an affection of the breathing, as if the patient were afraid of taking in a full inspiration.

Along with these symptoms there is insomnolency, with a somewhat flushed face and sunk eyes. The skin, in some cases, is of the ordinary temperature: more often it is hot and dry: very rarely it is covered with partial clammy sweat. There is commonly thirst; but the patient is so dejected, and unwilling to be disturbed, that she seldom asks for drink. The cleansings continue to flow as usual, and sometimes an imperfect secretion of milk begins.

Within a few hours from the attack, spontaneous diarrhœa comes on, followed by relief of the symptoms, and especially by subsidence of the swelling of the belly, and a corresponding favorable change in the state of the breathing. But generally a relapse soon takes place; for the pain of the belly returns, sometimes preceded by shivering, and always followed by tumefaction and uneasiness of breathing. The pain occurs in various degrees of severity, and in some cases shifts from the belly to the chest, and is then accompanied with harassing cough. The frequency of the pulse increases as the disease continues. At first, it varies from 100 to 110: in the second and third days, that is, after the relapse, it is from 120 to 130: after which it can scarcely be counted. The exhaustion of strength proceeds with great rapidity; so that, in the majority of cases, the patient sinks on the fourth or fifth or sixth day after the attack; vomiting of coffee-colored fluid (sometimes in large quantities) preceding, for a few hours, the fatal event.

Puerperal fever may be distinguished by the progress of the symptoms. It differs from peritonitis and inflammation of the uterus by the lochial discharge continuing to flow; and also by the particular condition of the abdominal tumor, by the appearance of the countenance, and by the state of the breathing. It is a most dangerous disease, especially when it occurs in hospitals, in which it sometimes appears as an epidemic. Happily it is of rare occurrence among the better ranks of society.

The exciting cause of puerperal fever seems to be a peculiar miasm; and from many facts which have been communicated to the author, on the best authority, and from many which have fallen under his own observation, he has no doubt that the disease is infectious in particular conditions of the atmosphere.

There is scarcely an acute disease for which a greater variety of alleged infallible remedies has been published, and yet every candid practitioner must admit the distressing mortality of the disease. Perhaps, in many instances, those who have blazoned forth their success in the treatment of puerperal fever, have deceived themselves by mistaking the disease. It is impossible, on any other supposition, to account

for such opposite remedies as ipecacuan emetics,—preparations of valerian,—the carbonate of potass,—the rectified oil of turpentine,—calomel purges, with mercurial frictions,—and the abstraction of large quantities of blood, with fomentations of the belly,—these being severally asserted certain cures for this alarming malady.

According to the author's experience, the disease ought to be treated as fever produced by extensive and peculiar inflammation, accompanied with extreme debility of the system.

BOSTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 1830.

PRIVATE INSANE HOSPITAL.

We understand that Dr. Cutter, of Pepperell, has made suitable arrangements for the accommodation of insane persons, and that his Hospital is now open for their reception. It has long been desirable that some appropriate place should be provided for incurables, since patients of this description are not received at the M'Lean Asylum, and yet require to be taken care of and provided for, in a manner which it is not convenient, and frequently very unsafe, to do in private families. It must therefore be a relief to the friends of such unfortunate persons, to know that a suitable place is at length provided for their accommodation and safe keeping.

It is however not the intention of Dr. Cutter to appropriate his buildings exclusively to that class of patients denominated *incurables*;—he will receive such, and provide for them in a suitable manner; but the primary object of his Institution is the relief and cure of insane persons, by a judicious course of medical treatment, where there is a possibility of so doing: and for this purpose his establishment affords every facility. He is himself its Superintendant, as well as Physician, and his place has the appearance and order of a regular hospital, as in fact it is.

Dr. Cutter's terms, we understand, are from $2 1-2 to $8 per week, including room, board, washing, medicine and medical advice.—He has every accommodation for exercising his patients on horseback and in vehicles constructed expressly for this purpose, at the bowling alley, &c. &c.; and the use of all these means is, as we learn, without expense to the patients, except in cases where such exercise forms a prominent part of the remedial course;—in such cases, his custom is to make some extra, although quite inconsiderable charge.

MODUS OPERANDI OF POISONS.

We have already taken occasion to lay before our readers some new views advanced on this subject by Messrs. Morgan and Addison, of Guy's Hospital. Our opinion with regard to them was at that time derived from such extracts from the work of these gentlemen as were to be found in the periodicals. We have, however, within a few days, had an opportunity of perusing the

work itself, and are enabled to speak of its contents with more confidence. The main proposition which it is the object of the work to establish, is the following ; that in all cases of poisons acting fatally on the system, whether the poisonous substance has been introduced into the stomach, or the blood, applied to the surface of a wound, or an unbroken mucous membrane, the effect is always conveyed to the brain through the medium of a nervous apparatus, perfectly distinct from that which serves for sensation and motion. If it were sufficient to establish the truth of this proposition that there is no other, equally general and conclusive in its character, which is free from difficulty, we should certainly admit it without hesitation. But as this cannot be held to be a just inference, and the hypothesis in question rests on no direct evidence derived from anatomical investigation, it must for the present be considered extremely doubtful. We cannot forbear remarking, in this connection, on the extreme difficulty of obtaining positive results, on subjects of this nature, from experiments on animals. We should feel safe in hazarding the assertion, that not one in ten of all these experiments has contributed anything to our stock of positive and useful knowledge in the science of physiology. Whether the advantage gained by mankind from the one tenth, be worth the torture inflicted on the inferior animals by the other nine, is a point not so easily determined. Nothing certainly could be more ingenious, or apparently more conclusive, than the experiments of Magendie and Brodie in regard to this point of the absorption of poisons ; yet, according to our authors, neither of these afford absolute demonstration, and therefore the subject is virtually left by them just where it was taken up. After all, we apprehend that we shall scarcely arrive at the truth in this matter, till some ardent amateur of science is willing to investigate it *à la Chabert*, and try a few experiments—on himself.

VACCINATION IN FRANCE.

It appears that, among other measures adopted by the French government to encourage the spread of vaccination, a considerable sum is annually appropriated to be distributed in prizes among those vaccinators who have displayed the greatest zeal in its propagation. A committee is regularly appointed by the Academie Royale de Médecine, to report the names of those who have thus distinguished themselves; which report is duly forwarded to the minister of the interior. Of that of the 8th of Dec. last, drawn up by M. Emery, and embracing many interesting facts with regard to the state of vaccination in that country, we offer a brief sketch to our readers.

The report commences by stating that, in many parts of the country, great prejudices still existed to oppose its introduction, and that these prejudices had been confirmed since the appearance of varioloid epidemics. A great obstacle to its propagation was found in the inactivity of the local authorities, and the coldness with which it was regarded by

the ecclesiastics in certain provinces. Fifty-five communes of one department have rejected the benefits of vaccination. At Metz, the Mayor himself refused to allow his children to be vaccinated. In other departments, on the contrary, the executive authority and the clergy have seconded, by all the means in their power, the efforts of the physicians.

The committee, although sensible that the efficacy of vaccination is a truth too well established to need confirmation, yet judge it proper to declare that, in many instances, variolous epidemics, already commenced, have been arrested in their progress by the immediate and general propagation of the vaccine virus.

A considerable portion of the report is devoted to the consideration of the varioloid disease, as intermediate between variola and vaccinia. In an experiment made by a M. Guillon, five hundred persons were inoculated with the varioloid virus, for want of the vaccine. In none of these did any eruption appear, except at the points of the punctures, and those which did show themselves had all the characters of vaccinia. Other physicians, however, have repeated the experiments of M. Guillon, and have seen genuine variola produced. Some vaccinators conceived the notion of diluting the virus of variola and varioloid by adding milk to them, and have employed them in this state. From this singular experiment resulted, in thirteen cases, an eruption which exactly followed the course of the vaccine vesicle. In five individuals there appeared, besides, some anomalous eruptions, which could neither be classed as variola nor varioloid.

The reporter introduces the question, whether the vaccine virus becomes enfeebled by a series of transmissions, and whether it is necessary to recur to the source in order to renew it. The affirmative answer to this question is said to be maintained elsewhere, but to have very few partisans in France. If, however, actual *cowpox* were wanted, it would not be necessary to seek it in Scotland, since it may be found in several of the districts of France itself.

The committee does not coincide with an opinion which has been advanced by some persons, that it is necessary to multiply the punctures greatly, and to avoid emptying the vesicles in their progress, in order to give the operation its full effect. Indeed it would be dangerous to give any popularity to this last opinion; as it would soon cause a dearth of vaccine matter, by inducing parents to refuse to permit the virus to be taken from their children, in order to give the disease to others.

Some new examples of variola or varioloid, in persons who had been vaccinated, have been presented to the committee; but these facts prove nothing against the efficacy of vaccination, since the same thing has occurred to those who had previously had smallpox. It also appears that variola or varioloid, occurring in those previously vaccinated, always presents a character of singular mildness.

REACTION AFTER BLOODLETTING.

From researches into the immediate and remote effects of bloodletting,

Dr. Marshall Hall has arrived at the conclusion, that most of the symptoms usually attributed to reaction, are a necessary and immediate consequence of the depletion itself when carried to a great extent, and especially when frequently repeated. Such are a frequent and forcible pulse, beating in the temples, throbbing pain in the head, intolerance of light and sound, and delirium. These constitute what are by him denominated *reaction with exhaustion*, and are to be most carefully distinguished from the evidences of that state, in which a return of the morbid symptoms for which the bleeding was prescribed, renders a repetition of the measure necessary. In making this distinction, the practitioner is exceedingly apt to be misled; for the effects enumerated are calculated to suggest the idea of increased energy in the system, and of augmented action in particular organs; and may thus lead to the adoption of the very measure which, while it affords a temporary and deceitful relief, will be certain, eventually, to increase the evil.—The same error, in the view of Dr. H., may be easily fallen into even at a later period, when the state alluded to has been succeeded by one of exhaustion with sinking, or a progressive failure of the vital powers; for the symptoms of this condition of the system often resemble so accurately a state of congestion in the lungs or fulness of the brain, as to prompt the unwary practitioner to use the lancet—a measure which may prove suddenly and unexpectedly fatal.

In the case of excessive reaction, the remedies recommended by Dr. H. are extreme quiet of body and mind, the use of the mildest sedatives and the mildest nutrients, and lastly and above all, time. It may be necessary, perhaps, to subdue the throbbing action in the head by local bloodletting; and it is very remarkable how small a quantity taken will afford relief;—two or three leeches are frequently quite sufficient,—and this seems to benefit the patient more by producing a determination of the blood to the external vessels, than by diminishing the amount of that fluid in the circulation of the part.

A HUNDRED AND SIXTY GRAINS OF CAMPHOR TAKEN AT ONE DOSE.

A MAN, aged 74, residing at Breslau, having taken by mistake four ounces of camphorated spirits, which had been ordered as a liniment, soon became affected with the following symptoms:—burning heat of skin, frequent, full and hard pulse, brilliancy of the eyes, redness of the face, heaviness of the head, anxiety, agitation, violent sense of heat in the stomach—then intense headach, giddiness, indistinctness of sight, and ocular hallucinations. The patient only complained of the heat, which he said was intolerable. The camphorated spirits of the Prussian Pharmacopœia contains 40 grains to the ounce, so that he had taken 160 grains at once. Some spoonfuls of almond emulsion were given him at first, and the heat of stomach diminished after a few hours, but the other symptoms continued. Two spoonfuls of a mixture, consisting of equal parts of vinegar and thick mucilage. He was calmer during the night—his head was clearer, and the anxiety diminished; copious sweating came on, followed by sleep, after which he became much better. The pulse, however, continued full and

frequent, and the voiding of the urine difficult. A light infusion of digitalis, with acetate of potass, was now given, and under this treatment the patient recovered in a few days.--*R. M.*

Imperforate Uterus.—An interesting case of this nature was lately read before the Royal Academy of Medicine, Paris, by M. Hervez de Chégoin. The uterus was completely imperforate, with entire absence of the neck. The menses had been retained for seventeen years, and latterly this circumstance had given rise to dreadful sufferings. The vagina, four inches in length, ended abruptly, and the uterus could be felt at some distance above its termination. A trochar was plunged, from the upper part of the vagina, through the parietes of the womb, and a gum-elastic tube introduced. The patient did well.—*Jour. Hebd.*

Transfusion of Blood.—This operation has been lately performed with perfect success in England, in a case of exhaustion from loss of blood during parturition. The hemorrhage was occasioned by the attachment of the placenta to the os uteri. About four ounces of blood were taken from the arm of the lady's husband, and transfused into the veins of the exhausted patient with decided benefit. The instrument used was Read's apparatus, and perfect recovery followed.

Jaundice produced by a Moral Cause.—A young man, aged 25, was passing along the street, when something fell at his feet; it was a person who had fallen from the second floor of a house. This made such an impression on the patient that he had nearly fainted, and soon a jaundiced appearance became manifest in the sclerotic coat, which successively spread to other parts of the body. Nevertheless, none of the functions were disturbed; the right hypochondrium remained soft and without pain. The jaundice gradually disappeared under the use of gentle remedies.—*La Lancette.*

Medical Graduates at Philadelphia.—At the recent Commencement at the University of Pennsylvania, one hundred and twenty-five gentlemen received the degree of Doctor in Medicine.

Comprehensive Professorship.—Edward Cutoush, M.D., of Washington City, late senior Surgeon in the U. S. Navy, has been appointed Professor of Chemistry, Mineralogy, Agriculture, and the Mechanic Arts, in the College at Geneva.

Daniel Drake, M.D., of Cincinnati, Ohio, the able and indefatigable Editor of the Western Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, has been elected to the Professorship of the Theory and Practice of Medicine in the Jefferson Medical College at Philadelphia.

WEEKLY REPORT OF DEATHS IN BOSTON, ENDING MARCH 20.

Date.	Sex.	Age.	Disease.
March 11	M.	3 yrs	dropsy on the brain
12.	F.	3 1-2	croup
	F.	43	unknown
14.	M.	19	hemorrhage of bowels
	F.	1 mo	unknown
	M.	62 yrs	asthma
	F.	26	intemperance
	M.	2 1-2	measles
16.	M.	9 mo	lung fever
	M.	33 yrs	drowned
	F.	50	delirium
17.	M.	53 yrs	unknown
	F.	3	lung fever
	F.	2	croup
	M.	13	consumption
18.	M.	75	old age
	F.	3 mo	cholera infantum
	F.	34 yrs	consumption
19.	M.	3 d	unknown
	F.	12 mo	lung fever
	M.	43 yrs	do.
20.	F.	8	unknown

Males, 9,—Females, 13. Stillborn, 1. Total, 23.

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